

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

1993 ~ 2023

Write to us at 1st Floor Academy House, 42 Academy Street, Inverness, IV1 1JT
Or call us on 01463 712 791



From Keith Walker, Convener, Befrienders Highland

"We're approaching the last few days of our 30th anniversary year, and with it some happy reflections on the enormous impact for good that Befrienders Highland is, and has been, for all of those 30 years.

We should never underestimate the good that comes from **friendship**, but even still the report I read in this morning's newspaper did cause a pause for thought. It was covering a statement from the World Health Organisation that loneliness is a global public health concern, with the health impacts reckoned to be equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. That rather stark figure really does underline **the importance of friendship and the value of everything we do**.



In this year of celebration, there have been many highlights which still make me smile when I remember them. The 30k for 30 run/walk/jog event in April was a new departure for us and thoroughly enjoyable! We owe a very big 'Thank You' to our Director, Jo, and her army of volunteers who planned and ran the day so well. The Civic Reception at the Town House in Inverness was a wonderful evening and we thank the Inverness Common Good Fund and Highland Council for enabling us to celebrate. Then in late October, our founder and long-standing Convener, David Stallard, was presented his British Empire Medal by the Lord-Lieutenant Joanie Whiteford. Many congratulations to David, and our sincere thanks go to him, for everything he's done for Befrienders Highland over so many years!

Whatever your plans are over the next few weeks, whether celebrating, resting, or hiding away from all the hubbub of December, I wish you all the very best and a healthy, happy 2024."



Update from the Mental Health Team

Autumn has truly arrived with colder days and all the beautiful autumn colours that the Highlands of Scotland show off so well.

It's also a time of year when days are shorter, and people are less inclined to go out and socialise. This is one of the reasons our befriending is so important. Our volunteers provide that valuable lifeline to people so that they can still have that social contact.

Our service is much needed in Highland, and our waiting list confirms this, with referrals coming in regularly. However, our coordinators are working very hard to match people up with volunteers they have something in common with so please bear with us if we haven't managed to match you yet.



We have also been involved with the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) in Highland secondary schools again this year. This is part of the S2 and S3 curriculum and involves groups of students picking a charity to support and then creating a presentation to their year group as to why their charity is deserving of £3,000.

Here, at Befrienders Highland, we always enjoy getting involved with the YPI and meeting the students. We have been lucky enough to be chosen a few times by students, and have been fortunate to receive £3,000 to help us continue providing our services; but more importantly engaging with the students allows us to get the word out in local communities about what we do, show the importance of befriending, and continually work at lessening the stigma which still exists around mental ill health.



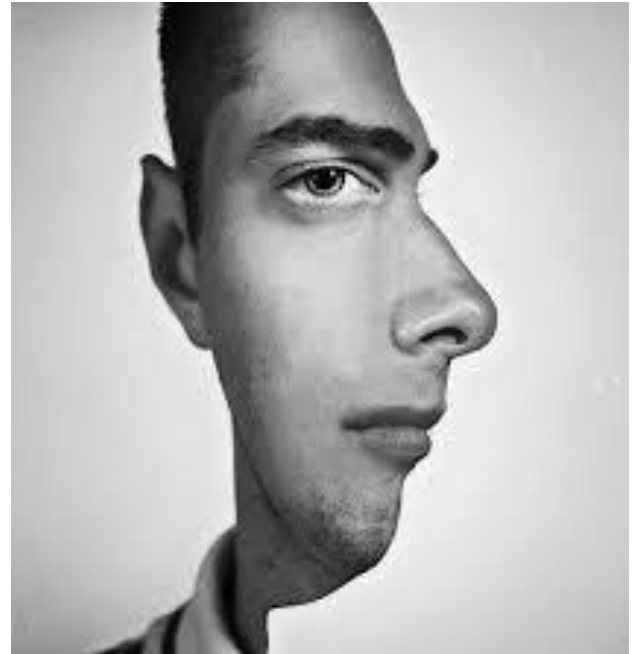
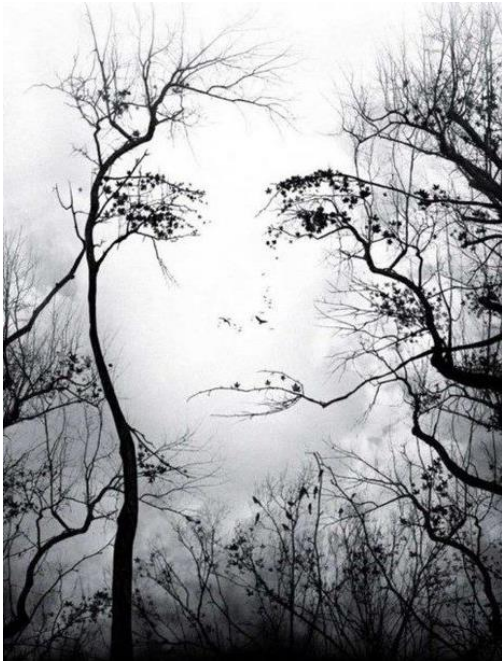
We wish everyone well over the holiday period and look forward to catching up with you all in the new year!



PUZZLE CORNER



WHAT CAN YOU SEE...?



D	A	N	C	E	R	Q	C	R	E	C	N	A	R	P	N	Y	I	H	Q	K
B	S	B	L	I	T	Z	E	N	S	E	M	A	N	G	N	J	S	Q	L	A
A	M	K	L	A	H	T	L	J	C	B	X	M	A	I	H	G	I	E	L	S
Z	C	V	D	H	L	S	G	K	H	R	E	M	H	J	V	Z	U	P	N	H
V	H	U	E	C	D	E	M	P	R	L	E	S	J	B	O	S	F	Y	G	D
R	E	Y	S	S	U	Z	U	W	I	S	E	J	S	I	C	P	E	Q	I	P
C	A	U	O	X	V	G	S	Y	S	R	C	F	N	P	R	E	B	C	R	T
F	K	G	N	H	I	L	D	F	T	H	M	O	D	J	L	U	V	A	H	T
C	T	C	D	G	X	M	R	E	M	S	U	G	R	G	U	C	O	G	S	J
V	X	F	E	B	E	T	M	M	A	A	O	U	S	Q	Y	H	I	V	K	C
D	Z	V	R	G	N	O	Q	N	S	O	J	J	T	B	D	R	A	P	U	A
C	P	L	W	X	C	Q	T	X	E	G	L	O	W	S	B	K	N	D	Y	Y
Q	R	M	O	A	S	A	S	L	V	E	R	A	C	I	Z	P	F	P	R	R
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N	N	V	Q	Q	V	Z	Q	X	M	O	F	I	L	O	V	E	D	H	T	H
S	N	Z	Y	Y	S	G	Z	F	X	N	D	F	K	J	X	T	R	P	S	S
F	O	E	L	A	U	G	H	C	Y	R	C	Z	H	J	N	O	P	L	I	A
A	D	O	R	I	O	A	L	G	L	P	X	N	D	I	P	U	C	O	H	D
H	C	D	D	S	M	Z	G	E	S	P	I	F	W	V	H	U	Q	D	D	T
B	M	E	I	M	A	O	I	K	H	K	I	B	D	V	B	V	R	U	F	V
G	P	O	S	T	F	K	K	V	U	A	K	L	L	C	M	A	R	R	C	A



ANSWERS AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTER!

Word Search

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer



BLITZEN
BRIGHT
CHRISTMAS EVE
COMET
CUPID
DANCER
DASHER
DONNER
FAMOUS
FOGGY
GAMES
GLEE
GLOWS
GUIDE

HISTORY
LAUGH
LOVED
NAMES
NOSE
PRANCER
RED-NOSED
REINDEER
RUDOLPH
SANTA
SHINY
SLEIGH
VIXEN



Fundraising!



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS
1993 ~ 2023

Wow! What a celebration year we've had!!

Coming into the winter months we have had lots to celebrate this year at Befrienders Highland, including within Fundraising!



We had the most entrants we've ever had into the Baxters Loch Ness Marathon 2023, and we hope to increase this again in 2024! Places are now open for the marathon in 2024 taking place on Sunday 29th September so please get in touch if you would like to enter this fabulous event and fundraise for Befrienders Highland at the same time!

We have also had lots of fundraising events taking place throughout the year to celebrate our **30th birthday** including our fantastic **30km for 30** event which took place on the 30th April, with a lovely walk/run starting and finishing at An Talla and following the Caledonian Canal with lovely scenic views over the Beaully Firth.

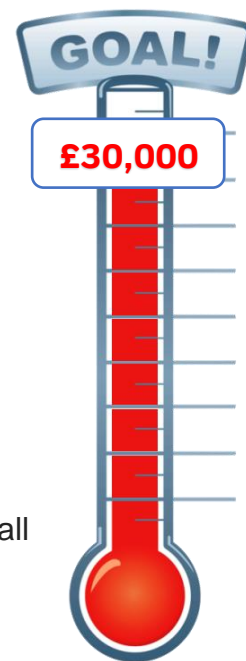
We also held a fantastic whisky tasting evening with Ardnamurchan Distillery in July at the Drumossie Hotel as well as going along to various events including a Wellbeing event in North Kessock in September.

Many of the events organised by our fantastic Fundraising Subgroup Committee – thank you very much to everyone who has helped with this over the past year including Bill, Jo, Malcolm, Sarah and Susan.

ALNESS +
PHARMACY



loch ness
by Jacobite



We were also lucky enough to be chosen to partner with An Talla and Jacobite Cruises towards the end of 2022 and for all of 2023 for fundraising events and support which we are very grateful and thankful for.



As we approach 2024 we are looking to expand our Fundraising Subgroup Committee, so please do get in touch if you think you may have some free time to help us expand the work we do supporting friendships across the Highlands margaretgrant@befriendershighland.org.uk

Margaret

Thanks so much to all our supporters who have helped towards our fundraising goal during this 30th anniversary year – we couldn't do it without you!



The total raised for the £30,000 for 30 years campaign equalled **£28,238** – as at 31st October.

If you, or someone you know, can make a contribution towards helping us raise the final £1,761 of our target, we will be over the moon!



Sarah

Film Group

The group meets at Eden Court in Inverness to share a drink together in the café beforehand and then enjoy a film.

Film meeting details go out to group members via email or letter when films are scheduled.



We are open for film suggestions so if you would like to join the group, you can also put forward a movie which the group might like to see.

Tickets are on a "pay what you can afford" basis.

Some recent films the group has enjoyed include "A Man Called Otto" and "Don't Worry Darling"



The group will next meet to see "Napoleon" on Friday 1st December.

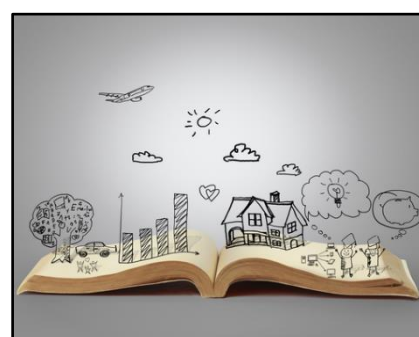
Write On



Creative Writing Group

Our creative writing group is always looking for new members & with the short winter days and dark nights what better time than to join our group & curl up with a pen and paper and give it a go.

You don't need to be a pro, it's all about enjoying writing and sharing it with our friendly supportive group of writers. If you have ever fancied trying your hand at writing poetry, limericks, short stories, non-fiction or anything in between, get in touch and give it a go. We have some great tips and tricks for getting started!



Are you up for the challenge...?!

Whether you're a fan of Christmas or not, why not write a limerick expressing your feelings for the festive period? It only needs to be five lines long, with the end of the first, second and last lines rhyming and the third and fourth lines rhyming.

Have a go writing a few and send us your favourite one and join the group. There are lots of free resources online for help to develop ideas or get in touch with us! We've given you a head start below!

If you would like to join our Film Group or would like some more information about the Writing Group please contact Alan at alanduncan@befriendershighland.org.uk or call 07410 696 375.

We are always open to suggestions for films, features or writing challenges for the group to try, so please do get in touch!



"There once was a snowman called Ray,
Who was having a lovely day,
Then it started to get sunny,
And he became all runny,
Then sadly Ray melted away!"

Grand Days Out with Befrienders Highland!



Friends and Volunteers from the Caithness area enjoyed a bus trip to the Castle of Mey in August

Although the weather could have been better, everyone had a chance to visit the Animal Centre at the Castle and stroll around the lovely walled garden and soak in the pretty sights and fragrances.

After tea in the Café, everyone embarked on a tour of the Castle of Mey which was the beloved summer home of the late Queen Mother and is now home to King Charles for his summer break in August each year.

Once again, we would like to thank our steadfast volunteer Lisa, for kindly driving the minibuss with a joyful smile, she always goes "above and-beyond" with her dedication to Befrienders.

Taking a careful look at the birds in the animal Centre



If you are interested in joining us on our next trip in the Caithness area please contact catherinepatterson@befriendershighland.org.uk

Seagull Trust Canal Cruise

Two fabulous days out were provided by the Seagull Trust for our Friends and Volunteers who had an opportunity to sail along the Caledonian Canal, cruising the 4.5 miles between Caley Marina & Dochgarroch. The group enjoyed the peace and tranquility on the water along with tea, coffee and biscuits!

"I really enjoyed the cruise, it was something that I had never ever done before, to sail along the Caledonian Canal."

"Thank you so very much for giving us a really lovely day out."



For more information about trips in the Inverness area in 2024, please contact:

Malcolm at Befrienders Highland on 01463 712791 or email to malcolmmacsween@befriendershighland.org.uk

Every Cloud... Extract from 'A Running Diary' by Malcolm MacSween

A couple of weeks ago I was planning a run up Ben Wyvis in preparation for the [Great Wilderness Challenge](#) (a 25-mile mountain race). The forecast had been promising, and I was really excited about the prospect of a run in the sun. I had planned in my head how my run was going to go, how the brightness and warmth of the sun would make me feel invigorated and full of energy, how I would 'be in the moment' and enjoy the journey as I passed through the incredible scenery on the way to the summit and back again...

That morning, I awoke energised and ready to go but the sky was overcast and grey - this was not what the forecast had promised. Normally I'm quite stoic, I try not to get too emotional about external things I can't control but that day it got to me. As I drove North, disappointment started to set in. Glancing up at the sky, all I could see was cloud, none of the beautiful warm sun that had been promised. Ever the optimist, I kept telling myself it would burn through the cloud cover and turn into a glorious summer's day for my most enjoyable and memorable Ben Wyvis run ever.

Unfortunately, the sun didn't burn through the cloud cover. I parked up at the start of the trail and opened the door. Instantly the car was filled with a mass of ravenous midges. Having been so distracted with the weather that morning, I had forgotten my midge repellent. This obviously fuelled my anger about the whole situation and by the time I left the car park to start my run I was spitting rage, and midges; I was NOT happy. Negative thoughts flowed through my mind like a torrent unleashed. **Everything** was annoying me!

Not long into my run, these feelings of anger and annoyance began to dissipate (running tends to do that). I started focusing on my breathing and my stride pattern, my senses heightened, and I became more aware of the terrain underfoot. My thoughts calmed and my mind relaxed. I started to smile at how things that were so infuriating a few minutes ago now seemed so inconsequential. I had fixated on things outside my control and paid the price. I had let myself go on an emotional rollercoaster for no real reason at all.

As I made my way up the mountain, it started getting very misty. I continued to ascend, moving through the thick fog, focussing on each and every step. By this point nothing was bothering me, I had accepted my situation which had allowed me to enjoy the experience for what it was. By the time I reached An Cabar, I had travelled through the murk to where it was clear, and I raced along the top of the hill to the summit.

The view from Glas Leathad Mor was not the one I was expecting that day, it was better. There is something truly magical about being above the cloud line. I never got the warmth of the sun on my face, but I got a perspective you don't get very often, a sea of clouds below you. Ben Wyvis means Awesome Mountain, and it certainly was that day.



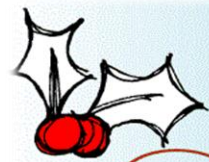
I think the moral of the story is this:

If you pin your hopes on external factors that are out with your control, there's a very good chance you'll be disappointed.

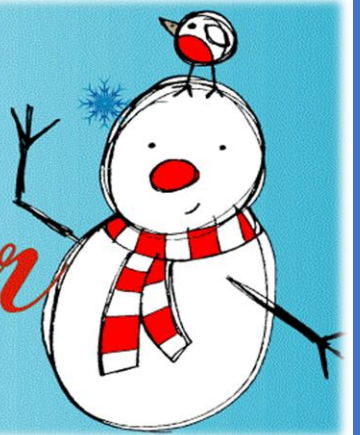
If things don't go exactly as planned, don't dwell on how your expectations weren't fulfilled, but look at the situation for what it is, recognise the beauty, and enjoy it.



Come and join us for
tea, coffee, mince pies
and a blether....!



December EVENTS



Monday 4th December

11am – 1pm

Perrins Centre, Alness,
IV17 0UE

Tuesday 12th December

11am – 2.30pm

Thurso Community Café,
The Harbour,
KW14 8DE



Thursday 14th December

9.30am – 2pm

Telford House, Williamson
Street, Wick,
KW1 5ES

Wednesday 13th December

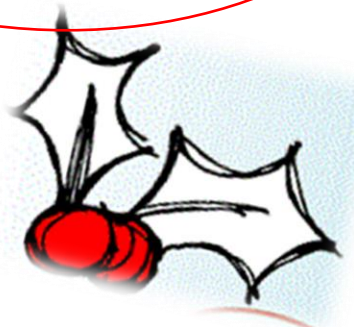
11am – 1pm

Academy House,
42 Academy Street,
Inverness

Friday 15th December

11am – 1pm

The Classroom,
Cawdor Street,
Nairn



Online Quiz hosted by
Catherine is open to all
members of Befrienders
Highland. Sit in the comfort
of your own home [with or
without your party hat] and
enjoy an informal fun quiz.
Unfortunately, no trip to the
north pole for the winner!

**Tuesday 5th
December
at 6.45pm**

Please contact: catherinepatterson@befriendershighland.org.uk and a secure zoom link will be sent.



GIFTS....

Some of our friends and volunteers like to exchange gifts at Christmas – and some mark birthdays too.

We are delighted to act as a forwarding office, but do ask you to remember these few guidelines:



The value of your gift should not exceed £5.00



Try to send a gift which is light in weight, and small in size, to help keep BHL's postage costs down.

Remember, small is beautiful!



Memory & Carer Service

Christmas and New Year is a time of year which can evoke an array of feelings; for many it can be a happy time, but for some of us it can heighten feelings of stress, loneliness, and grief.

The **Memory & Carer Service** have compiled a list of tips that will hopefully be of help over the festive period.

Carol would like to wish everyone a peaceful festive season and will look forward to catching up with everyone in the New Year.

- **Try to be realistic and practical.** Have the Christmas day that suits you. Take this pressure off yourself and don't place such high expectations on the day itself or on you.
- **Try and plan as much as you can.** Last minute things to do add even more stress. If you like to cook everything from scratch, try and do this before in stages and freeze as you go. If you shop online for food, try and get a delivery slot secured well ahead of Christmas. If the person you provide care for thrives on routine, try and build the Christmas period around usual activities such as mealtimes etc. You may also find it helpful to stagger any visitors and explain your plans to them to manage your stress as well as the person you care for.
- **Check Christmas opening times** of your GP's surgery and pharmacy or any other services that you rely on. Remember, you can always call NHS 111 for advice. And keep a list of important phone numbers handy, including GP's surgery or any family or neighbours that can offer support.
- **Try and rest or have time for you.** This could be having a relaxing bath, spending time reading, chatting with friends, or going for a walk.
- **Keep warm and well.** It is important to keep warm in winter – both inside and outdoors. Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu, and more serious health problems as well. Wearing several layers of light clothes can help. Make sure you're receiving all the help that you're entitled to. There are grants, benefits, and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. Home Energy Scotland provides free, impartial energy efficiency advice to householders, community groups and businesses. They can advise you on current grant schemes and offers: Call free on 0808 808 2282 during office hours to speak to a specialist advisor.
- **Check your medicine cabinet.** Ask your pharmacist what medicines should be in your cabinet to help get you and your family through the winter season. Many over-the-counter medicines (including paracetamol and ibuprofen) are available to relieve symptoms of common winter ailments such as colds, sinusitis, or painful middle ear infection (earache).
- **Prescriptions.** Make sure you get your prescription medicines before your pharmacy or GP practice closes for Christmas. And, if you've been prescribed antibiotics or any other medication, make sure you take them as directed.
- **Stock up.** If you can, stock up with enough food supplies for a few days, just in case you can't go out. If you do need to go out in the cold, wrap up warm and wear sensible non-slip shoes to help prevent any slips or falls.

Alzheimer Scotland 24hr Dementia Helpline

Tel: 0808 808 3000 Email: helpline@alzscot.org

The 24 hour Freephone Dementia Helpline provides information, signposting and emotional support to people with the illness, their families, friends and professionals. The 24 hour Dementia Helpline is confidential, and you don't have to give your name if you would prefer not to.

Samaritans

116 123 (freephone)

NHS 24

Call NHS 24 on 111.

Call if you think you need A&E but it's not life-threatening, your GP or dental practice is closed and you can't wait until they reopen or you need urgent mental health support. They will assess and advise you on the next steps.

You should always contact 999 in an emergency.

Support over the Christmas period



THERE ARE GOOD SHIPS
AND WOOD SHIPS
SHIPS THAT SAIL THE SEA
BUT THE BEST SHIPS
ARE FRIENDSHIPS
MAY THEY ALWAYS BE

I just enjoy the fact that she always says it's so nice to speak to someone, I think that is nothing for me to do, make a call, that's easy, and it makes somebody less lonely. Makes a huge difference to her, I can hear it in her voice.
Volunteer

My volunteer is always there on time for me. She is lovely, a calming force in my life.
Carer

I have more confidence now, just knowing there's somewhere I can talk freely.
Peer-to-Peer group participant

I am happy knowing that my wife is getting company and having a nice time with her Befriender, she really is a blessing to us.
Carer

You make a
DIFFERENCE
😊😊

You make
the world a
better place
😊

Here's how Befrienders Highland makes a difference...

It feels good knowing I am making a difference to him, he is waiting on my call and that is lovely.
Volunteer

Just makes me feel thought about. Somebody that is connected to me.
Carer

Both the group and BHL have helped my mental health – there is somebody there for me.
Peer-to-Peer group participant

Thank you
for caring!
😊

It's made such a difference. Whatever goes on in the group is confidential as well, I just love it. I feel so good afterwards.
Peer-to-Peer group participant

He's such a lovely man, I really enjoy our chats and I think I get just as much out of the calls as he does!
Volunteer

We
appreciate
YOU 😊

I absolutely enjoy the group, being there and the company. I enjoy the banter, I can talk and tell my stories and I enjoy that.
Peer-to-Peer group participant

We appreciate
your hard
work and
dedication
😊

STRIVE TO BE SOMEONE'S
RAINBOW ON THEIR
CLOUDY DAY..



If you would like to know more about Befrienders Highland and how you could make a difference to someone's life through volunteer work, please get in touch.

Email: info@befriendershighland.org.uk

Web: www.befriendershighland.org.uk

Phone: 01463 712791

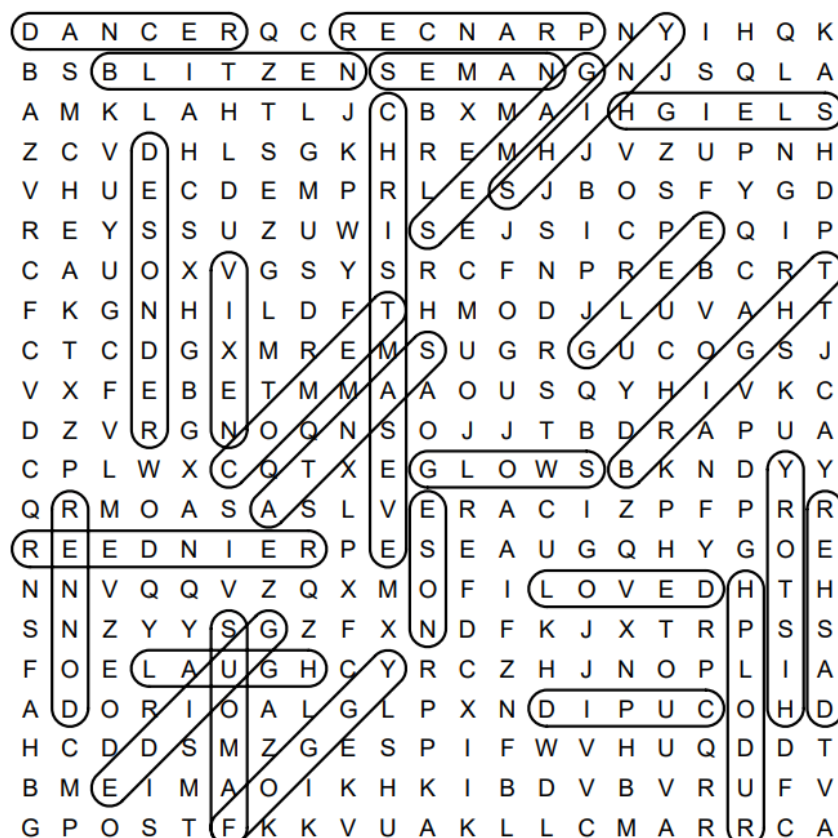
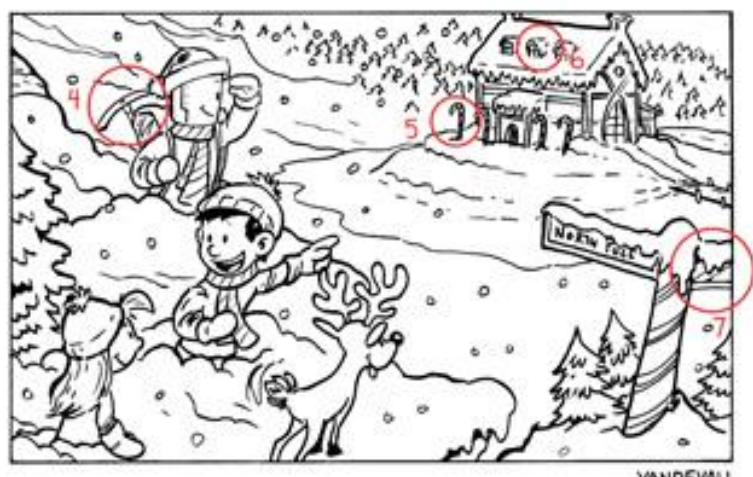




PUZZLE CORNER ANSWERS



How did you do...?



Fancy a change this Christmas.... Why not try this delicious easy Seafood Lasagne recipe?

Joan, one of our lovely volunteers, kindly shared this with us and it looked so good, we wanted to share it with you too! Enjoy!



You will need:

2oz plain flour	4oz lasagne sheets
1oz butter	1 egg
1 pint milk	5oz yoghurt
8oz smoked haddock (cut into bite size pieces)	4oz grated cheddar cheese
4oz prawns	
4oz peas	
Grated rind of half lemon	

What to do:

1. Make a white sauce by melting the butter in a saucepan and then adding the flour; whilst still on the heat, keep mixing thoroughly for a few minutes to "cook" the flour; then slowly stir in the milk, stirring all the time to remove any lumps; warm through until sauce thickens
2. Add the smoked haddock, prawns, peas and grated lemon rind
3. In an oven-proof dish, layer the fish sauce mix with lasagne sheets
4. In a separate bowl, mix together the yoghurt, egg and grated cheese and spread over the top pasta layer; keep a little cheese to sprinkle on the top; bake at 200 degrees for 30 minutes



Festive opening hours



Befrienders Highland offices in Inverness and Wick will be closed over the festive holidays:

Monday 25th – Wednesday 27th December

Monday 1st – Tuesday 2nd January 2024

If you do need to contact us during this time, please leave a message on the answer machine and one of the team will get back to you.

Inverness Office telephone number: **01463 712 791**

“Autumn”

The colours are vibrant, the sun is low,
The leaves on the ground, the hills with their snow.
Autumn arrives with its colourful glory,
Each leaf that falls has its own wee story.

Like the leaves on the ground, we too have our tales,
Each person unique with their wins and their fails,
We all have our fails, as well as our highlights
These are our lessons in life, our bright spotlights.

One thing we can all attempt when together,
Is offer our time, our ears, and a blether.
To the person not seeing the autumn colours,
Whose fails are winning against their powers.

Friendship in all its forms has power
To combat the fails and help in the hour
When all feels so dark, no colour or light,
It holds out its hand and holds yours so tight!

Friendship can open your eyes to the brightness,
The leaves on the ground now giving such goodness,
To the soil beneath so next year's trees flourish
In the same way you too can support and encourage.

Alison Campbell, November 2023

With sincere thanks to all our supporters,
volunteers and friends who have helped us to
celebrate the successes of Befrienders Highland
during this, our 30th Anniversary year.

We wish you all a happy, healthy, and safe festive
period and all good wishes for the coming year.

From everyone at Befrienders Highland

Write to us at 1st Floor Academy House, 42 Academy Street, Inverness, IV1 1JT
Or call us on 01463 712 791